

NOTE: Hand print names legibly; handwriting satisfactory for remainder.

Indices: ☒ Negative ☐ See below

Subject's name and aliases

Character of case

EXTORTION

Complainant ☐ Protect Source

Complaint received

☐ Personal ☒ Telephonic Date 8/22/89 Time 3:15pm

Complainant's address and telephone number

Village Voice, 842 Broadway, NY, NY

Summit, NJ 07901

Subject's Description	Race	Sex	Height	Hair	Build	Birth date and Birthplace
	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Weight	Eyes	Complexion	Social Security Number
	Scars, marks or other data					

Facts of complaint

Complainant (C) advised an envelope postmarked Newark, NJ, 8/15/89 was received at his office, addressed as follows: "Village Voice, 842 Broadway, New York, NY, Attention: [redacted] (Playing With Hell). Return address appears as: [redacted] (Summit, NJ, 07901.) Envelope contained a four-page letter stating threats of death, violence, abusive language on behalf of subject's religion.

C advised [redacted] is particularly concerned regarding the threats due to the nature of the news article which appeared in the Village Voice and the fact that this letter also contained the subject's name. Generally, most letters of this nature are sent anonymously.

C was advised to secure the envelope and letter, and it should be handled as little as possible. C requested that he be recontacted as soon as possible so as to determine a course of action.

② - (9- new)
1 - 66-7079A

OPEN OR REOPEN CASE
ORIGIN NY
DATE 8/23/89
SUPV [signature]
PI EFFECTIVE [signature]
9A-NY
P. 800
SECT. 27F-1

9A-NY-186561-1

Do not write in this space.

SEARCHED	SERIALIZED
AUG 22 1989	
FBI - NEWARK	

(Complaint received by)

BLOCK STAMP

Memorandum



To : SAC, DIV II, (9A-NY-186561) (c)

Date 12/2/90

From : SA [redacted]

(c-19)

b6
b7C

Subject :

VILLAGE VOICE - VICTIM;
EXTORTION;
OO: NY

Writer has kept in telephonic contact with

~~victim~~ [redacted], victims [redacted]

b6
b7C

[redacted] ~~has~~ advised that [redacted] has not received any further threats.

[redacted] Summit New Jersey Police Department interviewed ~~the~~ subject [redacted] and found him to be a rational individual with a wife.

b6
b7C

[redacted] has no arrest record.

Due to above facts, writer suggests this case be closed administratively.

OSM
CLOSE ON THIS

12/2/90
4 5 6

9A-NY-186561-12

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIAL	FILED
DEC 2 1990	

Field File No. 9A-NY-186561-1A1

Serial # of Originating Document

OO and File No. 9A-NY-186561

Date Received

From
(Name of Contributor)

VILLAGE VOICE

(Address of Contributor)

842 BROADWAY, New York, NY
(City and State)

By SA
(Name of Special Agent)

To Be Returned ☐ Yes ☒ No Receipt Given ☐ Yes ☒ No

Grand Jury Material - Disseminate Only Pursuant to Rule 6(e), Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure ☐ Yes ☒ No

Title:

VILLAGE VOICE - VICTIM
EXT. (A)
(OO: NY)

Reference:
(Communication Enclosing Material)

Description: ☐ Original notes re interview of

Copy Article "WHO IS
LISTENING TO LOUI'S FARRA KHAN?"
 - VILLAGE
Voice, Aug. 15, 1989.

b6
b7C

b6
b7C

Date September 6, 1989

Title and Character of Case

VILLAGE VOICE- VICTIM
EXTORTION (A)
(OO:NY)

b6
b7c

Date Property Acquired
August 28, 1989

Source From Which Property Acquired
Village Voice

Location of Property or Bulky Exhibit

VAULT SELF TOP OF 69
Bulky Room

Reason for Retention of Property and Efforts Made to Dispose of Same

To Be Returned
☐ Yes ☒ No

See Serial

Agent Submitting Property or Exhibit

Evidence

Agent Assigned Case

C-19

☐ Yes ☒ No Grand Jury Property - Disseminate Only Pursuant to Rule 6(e), Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

☐ Yes ☒ No Property to be Forfeited to the Government

Description of Property or Exhibit

ONE CELL

One plastic envelope containing a white envelope 3 1/2" X 6 1/2" postmarked August 15, 1989, Newark, New Jersey.

One plastic envelope containing two pieces of white notepaper with red inked handwriting, 8 1/2 X 11" in length.

see 1A-4
For Valuable and/or Narcotics Evidence Only

Evidence Bag Seal # _____

Signature of Two
Special Agents
Verifying and Sealing
Bag Contents _____

SEMIANNUAL INVENTORY CERTIFICATION TO JUSTIFY RETENTION OF PROPERTY (Initial and Date)

Field File # 9A-NY- 186561

1B1

OO: New York

EVIDENCE (PACKAGE COPY)

BLOCK STAMP

SEP - 6 1989

FBI NEW YORK

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

[illegible]

Item No.

Remarks

Field File No. 9A-NY-186561-1A2

Serial # of Originating Document _____

OO and File No. 9A-NY-186561

Date Received _____

From _____

(Name of Contributor)

(Address of Contributor)

By _____

SA

(Name of Special Agent)

To Be Returned ☐ Yes ☒ No Receipt Given ☐ Yes ☒ No

Grand Jury Material - Disseminate Only Pursuant to Rule 6(e), Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure ☐ Yes ☒ No

Title: _____

VILLAGE VOICE - VICTIM
EXT. (A)
(OO:NY)

Reference: _____

(Communication Enclosing Material)

Description: ☐ Original notes re interview of _____

Copies of Threatening
Letter and Envelope Addressed
to Village Voice Newspaper

b6
b7C

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
THIS SLIP FROM EXHIBIT
NY 9A-ny-186561-142

b6
b7C

[REDACTED]

With the kind of Bullshit
That you wrote About
My SAVIOUR AND Christ

Minister FARRAKHAN, I will
Personally Put your Fuckin
ASS To Death! You WANT
Hell? you got it. you WANT
WAR! well you got it.

The 47th chapter of the
QURAN IS - MUHAMMAD. It is als
known as WAR!

I will Put AN END To your
Damn Life With The

Help of my God (Allah) -
for attacking FARRAKHAN
And The NATION OF
ISLAM. This Ain't
FARRAKHAN'S words,
These Are My words
Come get me
Mother Fucker!
I'm Right here waiting
for you And The
F.B.I. to come

And get ME!

I understand why
~~you~~ wrote that dumb
shit. But I want you
to know that there is a
price to pay for everything
and you will pay for
this kind of lying shit
with your god damn
LIFE!

PdC That is A
PROMISE!

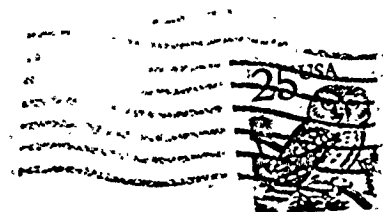
you damn dirty, lowdown,
Devil! Why don't you

Stand FACE to FACE
With Me OR ANY (FOI)

You won't stand up like A
MAN to The FOI because
we will turn

your ASS MAY Allah
into A god damn Destroy YOU
Mouse!

Summit, N.J. 07901



b6
b7C

Summit, N.J.

The Village Voice
842 Broadway, NY, NY
Attn



0003

b6
b7C

Field File No. 9A-NY-186561-1A3

Serial # of Originating Document _____

OO and File No. 9A-NY-186561

Date Received 8/28/89

From _____
(Name of Contributor)

(Address of Contributor)

By SA _____
(Name of Special Agent)

To Be Returned ☐ Yes ☒ No Receipt Given ☐ Yes ☒ No

Grand Jury Material - Disseminate Only Pursuant to Rule 6(e), Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure ☐ Yes ☒ No

Title: _____

Village Voice - Victim;

- Victim;

Reference EXTORTION (A)
(OO:NY)

(Communication Enclosing Material)

Description: ☒ Original notes re interview of

_____, 8/28/89

b6
b7C

b6
b7C

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
THIS SLIP FROM EXHIBIT
NY 9A-NV-186561-1A3

b6
b7C

[redacted]
Village Voice 842 Broadway N.Y. N.Y.
(212) 460-1452 [redacted]

[redacted] article published
August 15, 1989 "W/40 is listening
to Louis Farrakhan... and how did
he become the big man on campus"
Negative to Farrakhan & followers &
influenced black community.

U.S. Mail letter received office
Village Voice, envelope postmarked
Newark, New Jersey, dated Aug. 15, 1989.
Return Name & address was

[redacted]
Summit, N.J. 07901 2 page letter
written red ink Threatened life

b6
b7C

[redacted] Signed By [redacted]
People at "Voice" concerned. Notified
Summit, N.J. P.D. [redacted]

Knows group involved. organization
called Fruit of Islam. Live house
in Summit, N.J. Group follows Louis
Farrakhan, capable of violence.

[redacted] concerned & wanted [redacted] contact
F.B.I. [redacted] provided letter &
envelope, however handled by numerous
employees

b6
b7C

SA [redacted] FBI, New York 8/28/89.

Universal File Case Number

9A-NY-186561 1A-4

Field Office Acquiring Evidence

N40

Serial # of Originating Document

Date Received

6-28-96

From

Evidence Control Unit

(Name of Contributor)

(Address of Contributor)

(City and State)

By

(Name of Special Agent)

To Be Returned ☐ Yes ☐ No

Receipt Given ☐ Yes ☐ No

Grand Jury Material - Disseminate Only Pursuant to Rule 6 (e)

Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure

☐ Yes ☐ No

Title:

Reference:

(Communication Enclosing Material)

Description: ☐ Original notes re interview of

Evidence package copy for FBI
Evidence was destroyed on 6-28-96

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MEDÉLLIN CARTEL MURDERS LEFTIST STUDENTS (KEN DERMOTA, P.16)

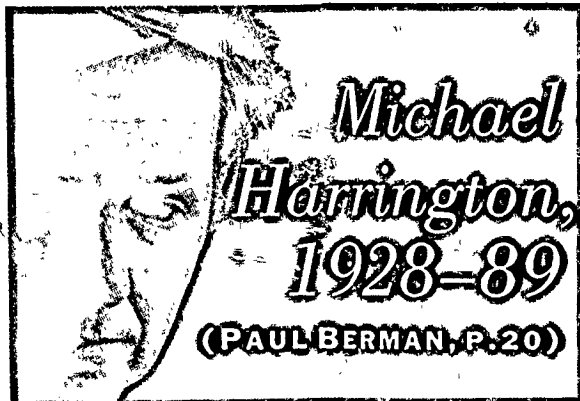
DINKINS'S TOUGH STAND ON GAY RIGHTS (RICHARD GOLDSTEIN, P.10)

LIVE FROM LOS ANGELES...THE GANG SHOW! (NELSON GEORGE, P.36)

CHECK IT OUT: SOUTH BRONX LIBRARY REVIVAL (SUZANNE RUTA, P.54)

thevillage

VOICE



FRED W. McDARRAH

VOL. XXXIIII NO. 33 • THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF NEW YORK • AUGUST 15, 1989 • \$1.00

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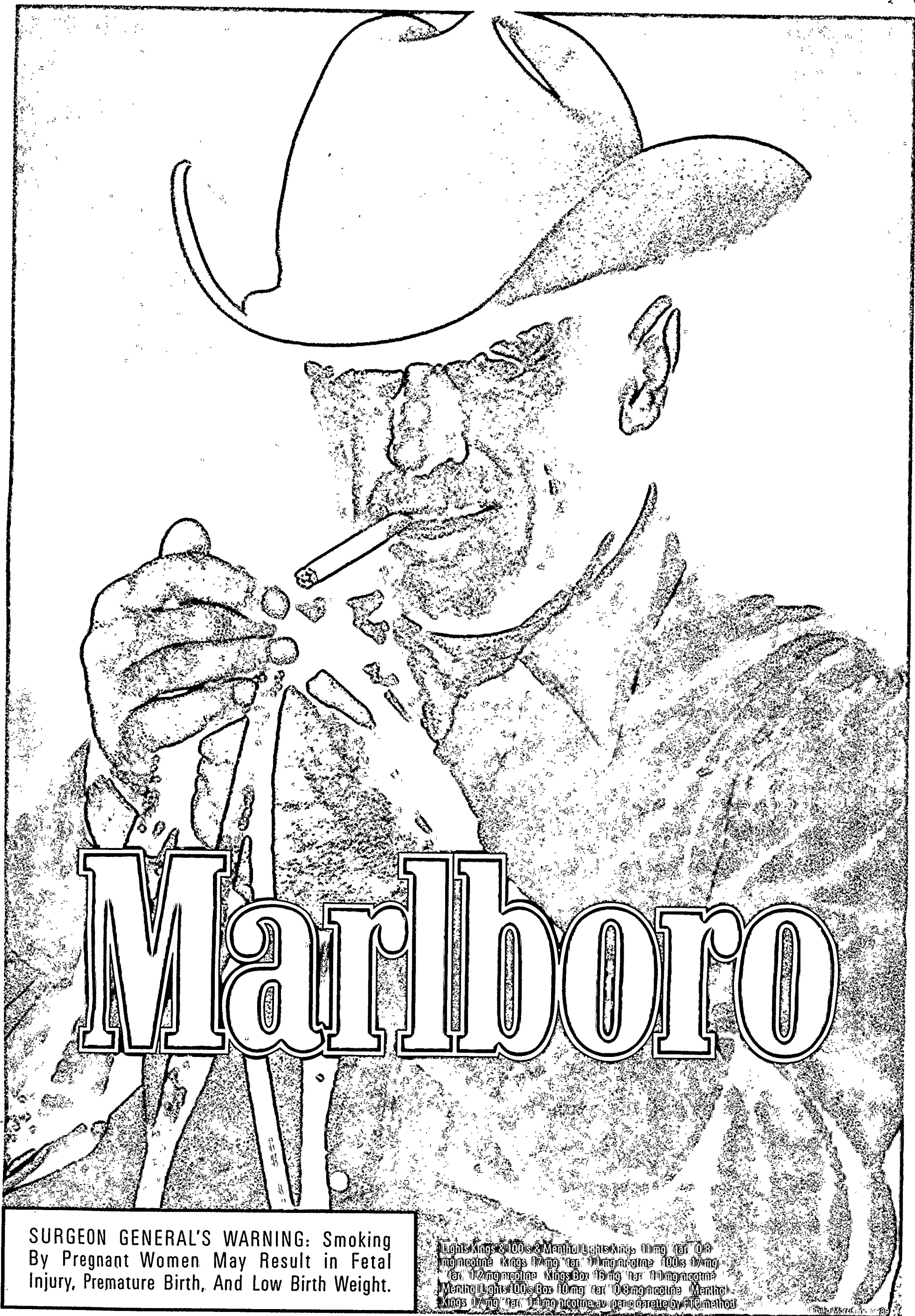
Who Is Listening to Louis Farrakhan?

*...and How Did
He Become
Big Man on
Campus?*

BY PLAYTHELL BENJAMIN (P.23)



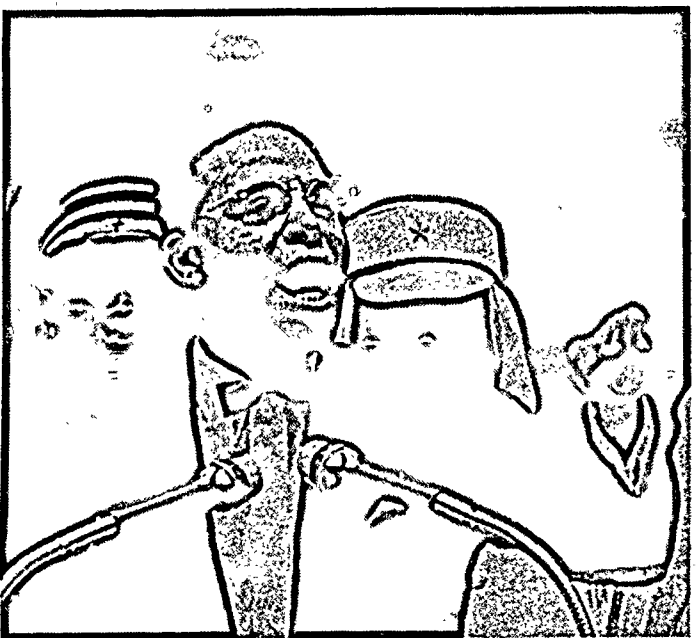
33



Marlboro

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.

Lights Kings & 100s 0.9 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.
Kings 1.1 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.
100s 1.1 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.
Menthol Lights Kings & 100s 0.9 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.
Menthol Kings 1.1 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.
Menthol 100s 1.1 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.



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THE ATTITUDE IS THE MESSAGE

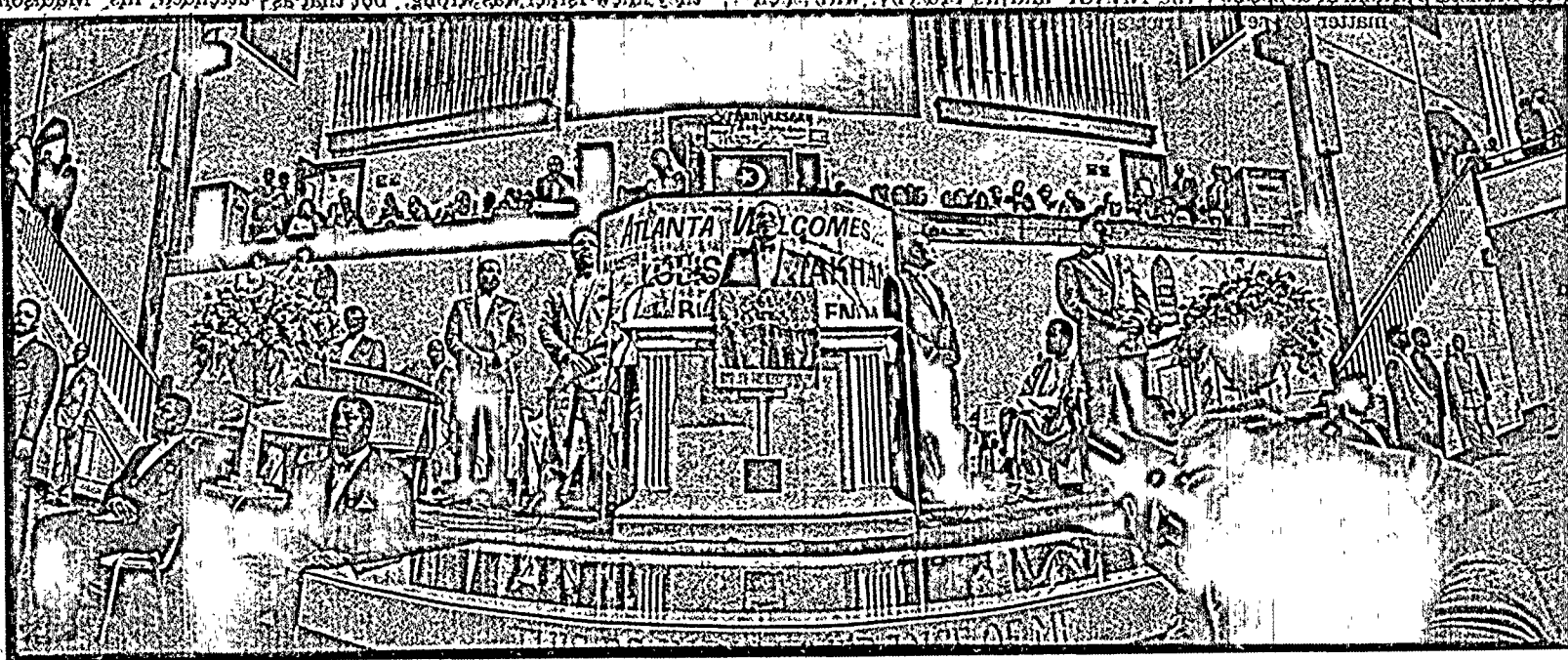
*Louis
Farrakhan
Pursues
the Middle
Class*

AS THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE TROOPERS and U. Mass police waved the bus away from the entrance to the campus center, the final stop on the Springfield to Amherst line, it was clear that something was going on. Those passengers who insisted upon proceeding were required to walk the rest of the way. Outside the Fine Arts Center—a massive unpainted concrete monument to the triumph of cost accounting in modern architecture—the streets were cluttered with mobile TV units from Boston. The klieg lights and the clusters of electronic cables, sprawled over the sidewalks like giant earthworms chillin' out on the cold pavement, gave the event the aura of a movie premiere.

It was showtime at U. Mass, but with the main attraction a black fundamentalist Muslim imam, the crowd—divided into antagonistic factions of pro-Zionist Jews, Palestinian sympathizers, African Americans, and assorted others—wasn't cheering. The night air was filled with the babble of rancorous rhetoric as each group loudly denounced the sins of its

C O N T I N U E D O N N E X T P A G E

BY PLAYTHELL BENJAMIN



FARRAKHAN'S SPEECHES ARE PART DOUBLESPEAK, PART BLACK NATIONALIST SLOGANEERING, PART ISLAMIC DOGMA, PART FREE-FORM RAP.

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

adversaries. Whenever Louis Farrakhan is on the scene you can bet your bottom dollar the joint will be jumpin', and on this night the joint was really jumpin'! In the 20 years that I have been trudging up to Amherst, I have never witnessed anything like the scene outside the Arts Center on February 2. It was a situation in which passion threatened to nullify reason and the anatomy of a riot was clearly visible.

Queuing up to enter the auditorium was like walking a gauntlet of inquisitors,

all hell-bent on exorcising an evil spirit from the life of the campus. The largest and loudest contingent of protesters was composed of Jews, among them extremist elements with a reputation for initiating violence, like the Jewish Defense League. The homicidal inclinations of some in this faction were evidenced by their chants of "Who do we want? ... Farrakhan! ... How do we want him? ... Dead!" To the largely black crowd entering the building this was an outrage, and several young black men issued a challenge to their JDL tormenters, daring

them to cross the police barriers. One black gridiron type warned, "I sure hope nobody don't fuck around and say the N-word ... cause I'ma havta jump over that horse and break my foot off in their ass!" That the situation did not degenerate into a full-blown riot says more for the efficiency of the security forces than the self-restraint of the impassioned mob.

Having learned from bitter experience that the traffic control surrounding a Farrakhan speech, which includes a body search of everyone entering the hall, requires about two and a half hours to

complete, I was in no hurry to get in line. In the meantime and in between time, I strolled around and rapped with the student body: white, black, and other. From these impromptu conversations several themes emerged that spoke volumes about why Farrakhan was here—the nature of his appeal to black students. The question most often asked by white students was, "Why are they bringing him here now? We have had enough racial problems on this campus and now things have cooled out." Black students viewed the matter differently. For them, the

WHAT THE MINISTER SAID

THE IMAGE of Louis Farrakhan as a violence-prone fanatic is largely a consequence of his affection for provocative public oratory. A close analysis of Farrakhan's oratorical style reveals a cavalier disregard for the nuances of language and an inflammatory rhetoric that supplies grist for the mills of a competitive, sensationalistic, and sometimes racist establishment press. Some of his statements seem explicitly calculated to provoke an avalanche of criticism, statements so outrageous as to be indefensible. The Milton Coleman affair, in which Farrakhan disagreed with the news judgment of a black reporter who wrote in *The Washington Post* that Jesse Jackson referred to New York as "Hymietown," is a case in point. Farrakhan's response came in a radio broadcast. He proclaimed, "I say but we gonna make an example of Milton Coleman! One day soon we will punish you with death."

Although Farrakhan tried to disown this particular threat, it is typical of the reckless rhetoric that has led the American public to view him as a murderous madman. Still, it sometimes seems that the mere mention of the minister's name brings out the media's worst impulses. For instance, on October 9, 1988, hysterical journalists quoted Farrakhan vowing to "kill and dismember" Tawana Brawley's attackers. Many fearsome inferences were drawn by news commentators, but in fact Farrakhan's words had been flagrantly misrepresented.

The occasion was Farrakhan's speech to the Nation of Islam's annual Savior's Day convocation in Chicago. Calling forward Tawana Brawley, who was on the dais dressed in the white gown (but not the headgear) of a Muslim woman, Farrakhan put his arm around her shoulders. After denouncing the grand jury conclusion that her case was a fraud, he

asked white America, rhetorically, "You want us to love you? Then do justice."

Farrakhan declared, "Well it's all right now! Cause she's ours, and we're hers." The audience rose to its feet in tumultuous applause, with the men, all members of the Fruit of Islam, raising clenched fists in the air. Farrakhan repeated, "It's all right now—because every one of these black men will kill concrete if they put their hands on this Muslim woman!" As the decibel level of the throng rose, Farrakhan shouted, "While the law of justice is in your hands you better use it. Because I swear, no I promise ... I affirm in the name of Almighty God Allah that He will, if I obey His law, if I keep His commandments, if I follow His messenger, He's gonna make me a power in America and throughout the world. And I will remember you for what you have done." The applause continued to build, and he was forced into a prolonged pause until it subsided enough for him to continue, "I will proclaim like Moses: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth and a life for a life! You rape my daughter, I will kill ya, and dismember your body and feed it to the fowl of the air."

It was this last sentence that was presented, after editorial manipulation, over the air. In its original form it is hardly radical—in fact, it succinctly expresses the feelings of every father I know, including myself. The net result of this mass abdication of journalistic ethics was to convince millions of white Americans, and some blacks, that Farrakhan was about to lead some secret black army against white men who were declared innocent in an exhaustive grand jury investigation.

There is hardly a mention of Farrakhan in the white press that doesn't remind us that this is the guy who said, "Hitler was a great man." The quote is always quickly followed by a hail of in-

vective, yet any objective analysis would reveal it as a vicious misrepresentation at best. In the context of an argument against confusing "greatness"—i.e., wealth, power, and public adulation—with righteousness, Farrakhan offered this example: "Adolf Hitler was a great man but wicked." Even a dimwit can see that this statement was not intended as a celebration of Hitler, but as a repudiation.

These willful misrepresentations by the press have sparked a reciprocal antagonism between Farrakhan and the Jewish community, one that has grown increasingly rancorous over the last few years. This seriously endangers the alliance against racism and reaction that rests largely upon the remaining goodwill between African Americans and American Jews.

Perhaps the worst example of the hyperbole that too often passes for reportage comes from the *New York Post*. In a column on Farrakhan's visit to New York in May 1988, headlined "Farrakhan's Orgy of Hate," *Post* writer Doug Feiden offered an explanation of how Farrakhan decided on May 22 as the date of his speech: "He chose Shavouth, the Jewish feast of weeks, to make his speech; perhaps guided by Josef F. Mengele, who knew the Jewish holidays and reserved them for his largest death camp selections." It is a curious allegation to level at a man whom nobody has accused of committing a single act of violence against Jews, or of advocating such acts.

One can only speculate on the reasons why so much time and energy are wasted savaging Farrakhan, especially when there are white, fascist paramilitary organizations running around the country dedicated to the physical extermination of their many enemies, most prominently American Jews. Groups like the

Order, the Covenant, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Aryan Brotherhood imagine sinister manipulations by international Jewry as being the root of the world's problems. As James Coates writes in *Armed and Dangerous*, "The common thread linking these ardently violent people together is a belief that the U.S. government has been taken over by a conspiracy of Jewish bankers and nebulous other dark forces who plan to bleed the country dry, then bring a nuclear attack down upon the withered shell. This final attack is what the Bible calls Armageddon." These groups disseminate their message via computer, modems, cable TV, radio shows, and literature distributed copiously at secret meetings all over the country. It is abundantly clear that, compared to anti-Semitic white groups, the Nation of Islam represents little more than a public nuisance.

Farrakhan's criticism of the Jews is fundamentally theological, growing out of his ethnocentric interpretations of the Bible and the Koran. In his attempt to reverse biblical imagery in order to create a symbology that makes black Americans the chosen people of God, Farrakhan has attacked the legitimacy of Judaic theology. It was in this context that he called Judaism "a gutter religion." And though Farrakhan has tried to distance himself from that statement, it's still his, clearly recorded for all to hear.

Obviously Jews, whatever their political persuasion, cannot accept Farrakhan's view. And it is not unreasonable for Jews, who have voted for black politicians twice as often as other whites, to expect African-American politicians and other leaders of black opinion to declare where they stand on this issue. But Louis Farrakhan's wayward theology doesn't give commentators the right to twist his words as they please. —P.B.

ELIJAH, MALCOLM, AND LOUIS

THE NATION OF ISLAM was founded over a half century ago by Elijah Poole, a small chestnut-brown man from Georgia who changed his name to Elijah Muhammad. Declaring himself a prophet sent to salvage the "lost found nation of so-called Negroes" in the wilderness of North America, Elijah claimed he was visited by God/Allah in the person of Master W. D. Fard Muhammad, a Turk with a shadowy history who looks like a southern European in the pictures I've seen. It was W. D. Muhammad who "revealed the truth" to Elijah: white folks are devils who are evil by nature; the black man is the original seed; America is doomed and will soon suffer the wrath of Allah; black Americans are the chosen people spoken of in the Bible and they must separate from the whites in order to avoid the punishment of God. Hence, in Muslim theology, it was blasphemy to integrate with the evil whites who had brought us only "slavery, suffering, and death." This is why the Nation of Islam opposed the integrationist aims of the civil rights movement. (For a thorough analysis of the NOI's theology, see C. Eric Lincoln's *The Black Muslims in America*.)

In order to understand the ready appeal of Elijah Muhammad's message, one need only consider the state of black America at the time of his appearance. In the 1930s almost half the U.S. had apartheid laws denying African Americans the vote and relegating them to separate and unequal facilities, and the rest of the nation engaged in such practices without benefit of law. It was six on the one hand and a half a dozen on the other—de facto and de jure. Lynching, the practice of publicly crucifying blacks in a carnival-like atmosphere, was still a commonplace of American life, and with all its legal aplomb and lobbying ability, the NAACP was unable to secure the passage of a federal antilynching bill. Afro-Americans were routinely insulted by racist representations of black characters in movies, radio, vaudeville, newspapers, popular magazines, textbooks, and the imagery of commercial products from pancakes and bathroom cleansers to liver-lipped lawn jockeys. So when Elijah Muhammad announced that "the white man is the devil," the truth of the statement seemed obvious to many African Americans.

It must also be remembered that Elijah Muhammad made his appearance during the Great Depression, so his message of "We must do for self" had a ready appeal to black Americans, the last hired and first fired, who already enjoyed a long history of cooperative economics. A small, barely articulate man with a high-pitched voice, Mr. Muhammad delivered his message of divine grace with a steely resolve whose eloquence lay in its simple conviction and apparent truth. While not personally charismatic, Elijah Muhammad put together an organization that had many of the fundamental requirements a movement needs to survive and grow: a comprehensive ideology, power-packed slogans and symbols that can express complex ideas in simple terms for mass consumption, fundraising ability, means of propaganda dissemination, devoted followers who are willing to proselytize and recruit in person, and a clearly visible enemy. However, in order to flourish, a movement also needs charismatic evangelists—great orators who can excite, inspire, and convert large numbers of people. It is these powerful verbal exhorters who must take the message to the masses and no social movement in history has been successful without them.



Elijah Muhammad: steely resolve, simple conviction



Malcolm X: indifferent to fashion



Farrakhan: skilled at show business

This is why Malcolm X was so important to the rapid growth of the Nation of Islam in the early '60s. Tall and physically impressive, Malcolm spoke with a voice that seemed to embody both the rage of the black masses and the wrath of Allah. When I first heard him speak at the Lancaster Avenue mosque in West Philadelphia in 1962, it was the closest thing an avowed atheist could experience to a religious conversion. As the spokesman for the West Philadelphia Young Republicans League, I was the least likely convert in the house. But I had not then, nor have I ever, heard an orator who could convey a feeling of righteous indignation in the face of injustice with the power and passion of Malcolm X. His speech rocked my world and I was born again as a black militant. Over the years I have discovered that my conversion to a militant black nationalist vision through the preachments of Malcolm was not unique. It is a vital part of the political, spiritual, and intellectual evolution of many of the best and brightest African Americans of my generation. Malcolm X understood well his role as the "national representative of the honorable Elijah Muhammad." In his public statements he regularly paid homage to Elijah Muhammad, whom he referred to as "The Messenger," the source of all his wisdom. On many occasions I witnessed Malcolm publicly compare Elijah Muhammad to Moses and the original Is-

lamic prophet, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, the founder of Islam. But Malcolm and Elijah eventually came to a parting of ways over Mr. Muhammad's hypocrisy about sexual relations with several of his female supplicants, a matter Malcolm discusses candidly in his autobiography. Malcolm X was silenced and relieved of his ministerial duties by Elijah for announcing, "The chickens have finally come home to roost." When President Kennedy was assassinated, Malcolm struck out on his own. First organizing Muslim Mosque, Inc. in 1964, Malcolm quickly recognized the need for a purely secular political organization and founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity, modeled on the Organization of African Unity. In his capacity as the leader of the OAAU, Malcolm X traveled to Africa and made powerful contacts. He was planning to bring the African-American question before the United Nations and accuse the U.S. government of human rights violations, a brilliant though not original idea. (The black communist lawyer William L. Patterson had already prepared a detailed brief, which was published in book form as *We Charge Genocide*.) But Malcolm X was brutally murdered, gunned down at one of his Sunday afternoon rallies at the Audubon Ballroom in Washington Heights. And it appears that his dream of bringing the African-American question before the UN died

with him. Over the past two decades a myth has grown up that Louis Farrakhan is an extension or clone of Malcolm X. The persistence of this notion reflects the antihistorical attitude that Harold Cruse warned us infects the American vision. From our meeting in 1962 until his untimely death in 1965, I saw Malcolm X speak scores of times. I also conducted several radio interviews with him on a black talk show broadcast over WDAS radio in Philadelphia. I remember Malcolm as a person who projected a genuine humility before the people he sought to serve. His single-minded devotion to the struggle made him indifferent to things like fashion and the accoutrements of show business. When he was the most sought-after speaker in the nation I would often see him with frayed lapels and missing buttons. Malcolm was an activist who was rapidly learning the art of politics and forming new alliances. And, most important, Malcolm X was an honest man who called out injustice wherever he found it, even if it was in the racial dogma of his religion or the bedchambers of the prophet that raised him. Malcolm was indifferent to personal danger and his love for black people was omnipresent, especially when he was talking about dancing to Count Basie's band or listening to Lady Day. In contrast, Farrakhan is a preening peacock, always impeccably dressed and skilled in the techniques of show business. He is so full of himself that his posture before audiences of people he seeks to lead is often distant and reeks with a pugnacious arrogance. While he refers to himself in communiqués as "the national representative of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad," Malcolm's old title, Farrakhan also claims that he was called by God to lead, a claim Malcolm never made. When confronted with the evidence of Elijah Muhammad's philandering, he offered public apologies that were often ludicrous. And most of all, Farrakhan has not grown intellectually or politically over the years. He is still spouting a line on race and religion that Malcolm X was in the process of rejecting after his pilgrimage to Mecca over a quarter century ago. Hence the similarities between Malcolm and Farrakhan are confined to their roles as charismatic evangelists and the fact that for many years Farrakhan imitated Malcolm's oratorical style (it was like listening to John Coltrane play the saxophone and then hearing David Liebman). When Elijah Muhammad died in 1975, Farrakhan, despite his unquestioned loyalty and charisma, was passed over for leadership of the Nation. As the messenger, Elijah handpicked his son, Wallace, to succeed him. According to NOI sources, Farrakhan was unhappy with the choice because Wallace had supported Malcolm X against his father. But then, one cannot argue with divine wisdom, can one? Wallace, a low-key and uncharismatic man, set about dismantling the NOI. He sold off the organization's assets and rejected his father's ideas on race and religion. I heard Wallace say in many public speeches during the late '70s that Elijah Muhammad never believed his own theology, but thought it was a good thing for black Americans at their stage of development. Wallace is now the leader of an orthodox Muslim order called simply the Community of Al Islam in the West. In the late '70s and the '80s, Farrakhan built on the remnants of the old organization to resurrect the Nation and restore Elijah Muhammad's theology. I predict that his following will continue to grow as long as significant numbers of African Americans continue to despair over their future in America. —P.B.

right to invite Minister Farrakhan to speak at the university was a matter of self-determination, a core cultural value with deep roots in African-American history.

It is abundantly clear from their observable style, temperament, and appetite for sensual pleasures that most black students reject the repressive puritanical code advocated by Louis Farrakhan. Hence, most are constitutionally unsuited for membership in the Nation of Islam, of which Farrakhan is chief minister. This explains why the increased demand for his presence on college campuses does not appear to be accompanied by any dramatic growth in the ranks of the organization itself. Most of the black students I talked to didn't know much about Farrakhan, and had never heard him speak, even on a recording. They came out to hear him because they had observed elements in the white community attempting to deny Farrakhan his right to a forum, thus denying them their right to intellectual freedom. An excellent example of the kind of anti-Farrakhan hysteria that inspired black students to mobilize behind him was provided by Leonard Zakim of B'nai B'rith, who told an earlier campus "open forum on race relations": Farrakhan is "the most notorious anti-Semite of this century." The students preferred to believe the hip-hop crew, Public Enemy, who admonished them not to make up their minds about Farrakhan "until you hear the man," and warned, "Don't believe the hype."

PERHAPS NO PUBLIC FIGURE in America today inspires as much fear and suspicion as Louis Farrakhan, pretender to the role of premier leader of Afro-America. The Louis Farrakhan portrayed in the media is an unshaded character, consistently hateful and hated. Yet Farrakhan has a following, and it may well be growing. His portrayal by the media as a dangerous black lunatic [see sidebar, "What the Minister Said"] is viewed by many African Americans as nothing more than character assassination, a ritual murder by ideological adversaries who want to destroy Farrakhan's credibility and silence him as an effective voice in the struggle for black survival. In fact, as the level of press hostility increases, so does the level of support Farrakhan receives from African Americans—many routinely disregard all criticism of black leaders emanating from the white media.

Farrakhan as he presents himself—the Farrakhan perceived by many if not most African Americans—is quite different from the media horror show. He projects independence and self-assurance, he actively fights the drug trade in black communities, and he at least talks about economic development for African Americans. Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam are now attracting middle-class followers, a departure from the church's traditional base in the urban working class. The question is: Why is Louis Farrakhan a national leader when his national media image could hardly be worse?

Historically, the Nation of Islam has recruited largely from the urban working class, offering a vision of progress through moral cleanliness and cooperative economic enterprise. Like Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association, which had its heyday in the '20s, it builds on a tradition of African-American self-determination that dates to the 18th century and includes religious denominations, abolitionist organizations, cultural institutions, and a wide variety of business enterprises. As Harold Cruse points out in *Plural but Equal*, demographic changes had a profound impact on the rise of these two most prominent 20th century nationalist movements. By 1930, 18.7 per cent of the nation's urban black population was concentrated in the northern industrial centers of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Detroit; in New York and Chicago, the increase since 1910 had been 260 per cent and 430 per cent respectively. It was largely economic motives that prompted this migration, motives that

the NAACP and its progeny, with their strict adherence to a philosophy of non-economic liberalism, failed to address. And so it is no surprise that both the UNIA and the Nation of Islam, founded in Detroit in 1932 by Elijah Muhammad, had their greatest success in the northern industrial centers.

But Farrakhan understands that there's only so far he can go with a membership rooted in the lumpenproletariat and working poor. In order to realize his vision of an independent, self-supporting African-American nation, he must attract African-Americans with skills and resources. To help broaden his base, he has begun to ecumenize. At a 1988 speech at Manhattan Community College, for instance, he appeared with the Reverend Robert Castle, a white Christian cleric from St. Mary's Church on 126th Street, who announced, "It is an honor to be on the same stage with Minister Farrakhan," and later added, "I live right across the street from the precinct but I feel much safer here." Farrakhan has also taken pains to clarify his relationship to Judaism. At U. Mass he was cheered when he told the Jewish community, "I wish you life," a striking contrast to the JDL's calls for his death outside the auditorium. He reported that "several highly placed rabbis" had told him in his own home that

"they knew Israel was wrong," but that as an outsider Jesse Jackson had no right to criticize the Jewish state. He also challenged the accusation that he had praised Adolf Hitler: "How dare you say that I love Hitler! How dare you say I love a man who hated blacks!"

Farrakhan has enjoyed some success among educated middle-class African Americans: in the wake of the economic setbacks and racial hostility experienced by millions of African Americans in the Reagan era, blacks of every class are disillusioned with the American dream. A recent Urban League report shows the gap between white and black family incomes has widened dramatically over the last 10 years, with blacks' median family income barely half of whites'. Under Elijah Muhammad, the Nation developed service enterprises centered around the urban mosques, but never entered such lucrative fields as middle-level retailing, wholesaling, manufacturing, insurance, and investment. Farrakhan's promise to lead African Americans into these promised lands broadened his following among upscale black Americans, especially after he unveiled his so-called "Power Program" at Madison Square Garden in 1985. And the fate of this program has cost him. When I conducted a random poll of friends and associates who had

attended his Madison Square Garden speech but skipped more recent appearances, they all gave the same reason: they had lost faith in Farrakhan as an apostle of economic salvation. And after interviewing several businessmen who had dealt with the NOI under his leadership, I understand why. On the one hand, I heard a fantastic fish story, a comedy of errors whose major theme was managerial incompetence. On the other, I heard a sad tale of innocence and naiveté in the predatory world of the capitalist market.

First the fish story. A few years ago the Nation of Islam was importing fish from Peru in an attempt to capture black inner-city consumers. The New York organization was headed by Louis Farrakhan, then minister of the mosque. A young man with a business background, whom we will call Rachid, was a member of Farrakhan's mosque at the time and recalls, "[Farrakhan] had no idea how to manage a business and would not allow brothers with business skills to take charge and run the show. Instead, he placed his assistant ministers in positions of authority." In order to get the product to potential customers, Rachid said, Farrakhan organized the Fish Force, which was composed of mosque members "who were expected to quit their jobs and sell

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

"She loves my cooking. And she drinks Johnnie Walker."



Good taste is always an asset.



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fish full time. They worked on straight commission and often could not make ends meet well enough to pay their bills. Instead of grabbing up available storefronts near the new mosque on 125th Street—the same stores now occupied by the Koreans—Farrakhan decided it would be more effective if the members of the force carried the fish to the customers. So we would trudge around with two shopping bags full of frozen fish.

"Since our market was the black community, especially the projects because of the population density, I tried to tell them it was a mistake to package the fish in 10-pound parcels because most people in our market don't own freezers with sufficient space to store this quantity of meat, but my advice was ignored." As a result, the Fish Force quickly degenerated into a fish farce: "We were running around in the projects busting open packages of frozen fish against the wall trying to make five-pound packages on the spot. It was a real mess out there." The salesmen were put in an impossible position: "We were expected to work a full shift on the Fish Force, but only the assistant ministers, who did very little work, received a base salary. This created conflict in the households of brothers who had quit their jobs and could not meet their financial responsibilities. Some families actually broke up over this issue." (Brother Wali, editor of the NOI's *Final Call*, responded to these charges: "I don't know whether these FBI agents planted to disrupt the mosque or what. We have no comment.")

It took some doing to find anyone who has actually seen and touched a "power product," the fruit of Minister Farrakhan's manufacturing venture. But after a considerable search I located a Harvard-trained, successful African-American retailer in Washington, D.C. In a predominantly black city like Washington, one would assume these products would sell. This has not been the case, at least not in the experience of this black businessman.

"Farrakhan's organization understands very little about the science of marketing," he said. "First, they choose to go with cosmetic preparations as a start-up product. Then they expect to market it with virtually no advertising. The problem is that consumers of hair-care products and other cosmetics are very brand-loyal, and they are not about to switch just because Farrakhan thinks that they should—plus, the big cosmetics companies have reserved shelf space in all the major retail chains.

"On top of that, Farrakhan has alienated the Jews, and they control much of the wholesaling sector of the economy," the retailer said. "Without their participation there is little chance of distributing a product in the major markets. Frankly, I'm having a hard time moving the product." By contrast, Fashion Fair, a cosmetic line for black folk produced by the Johnson empire, is making millions. Through his "Ebony Fashion Fairs," a 25-year tradition, John Harold Johnson's business has set the standard of elegance for *femmes noires* internationally. The difference is that Johnson, founder and publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet*, is an astute businessman who understands the African-American market.

The Fish Force is now defunct. Power Products are rarely if ever seen in the black community except on tables from which they're peddled after Farrakhan's speeches—and in full-page ads featuring Public Enemy's Chuck D. in *The Final Call*. Power Products spokesman Roger Moore claims, "We're doing fine. We have no major wholesalers, but we have an army of black people out pushing our products," but there's no question that lack of commercial success has stymied the NOI's bid to organize the black middle class. But its courtship of the black middle class of the future continues at a hot pace, as Farrakhan concentrates on recruiting black college students. Stu-

dents are much more emotional in their response to Farrakhan than their parents. Requiring no evidence of accomplishment, they're willing to settle for rhetorical exhibitionism. In an effort to understand this appeal, I have visited three predominantly white campuses where Farrakhan has appeared over the past 18 months: the University of Pennsylvania, a prestigious private academy; Manhattan Community College, an inner-city junior college; and U. Mass, a major public university. At all three I was impressed by how skillfully Farrakhan exploits America's blatant racism in the distribution of economic benefits when he speaks to black students, a group whose personal experience in their supposedly enlightened academic environment makes them highly conscious of racial discrimination.

FARRAKHAN'S U. MASS speech was the inaugural event in the monthlong celebration of African-American history on the Amherst campus of the University of Massachusetts. The evening was sponsored by a consortium of six student organizations: Black Agenda, Afrik-Am, Phi Beta Sigma, Distinguished Visitors Program, Minority Graduate Association, and the Black Mass Communications Project. A tersely worded blurb in the program told us exactly where the students' heads were at: "The 1980s and the '90s represents a major challenge for Black students. Seeds planted by committed '60s activists are now coming to fruition, as their children come of age and enter college. The Black students of the '80s and '90s must reject the selfishness and individualism of the 'Me Generation' and confront serious life issues. Why are you going to college? What is your purpose in life? How will you benefit your people?"

These were serious young people who had given black empowerment on campus a lot of thought. Their printed program is a remarkable document that analyzes the problems of the black student community within the larger white university structure and actually proposes a solution, including a blueprint for a new student organization. When A. Anthony Gee, a student "spokesperson of the Black Agenda," took the podium to welcome the audience, he stated the goal of African-American history month as "erasing the slave mentality of blacks, and the assumptions of white supremacy." Following a short documentary film of powerful Afrocentric images, Gee read a poem by Haki R. Madhubuti, a/k/a Don L. Lee.

The images of black men parading by in Madhubuti's poem reflected the posture adopted by the black male students. It is a puritanical and somewhat chauvinistic ideal of manhood that celebrates the dedicated ascetic nation builder, reflecting the black nationalist sentiments of the activist students. The male students were dressed in the conservative authority suits favored by the Nation of Islam. But the female students were dressed like flygirls, with lots of leg showing and clinging frocks accentuating the lush proportions of their curvaceous derrieres. I mean the sisters righteously let their hair down and were ragged out to the max. Their style was the antithesis of the Muslim ideal of the veiled and covered woman. This was but one of a panoply of contradictory images that made the ambience of the affair one of ambiguity. Contradiction was everywhere: in the conflicting styles of the male and female students, in a film that accompanied images of jazz musicians with a disco soundtrack, and most dramatically in the decision to pay a religious circuit exhorter \$17,000 to expound on weighty secular questions that a local community of outstanding black scholars would gladly have addressed for a pittance.

Farrakhan's entrance was preceded by a short speech from the honorable Oumarou G. Youssoufou, UN representative

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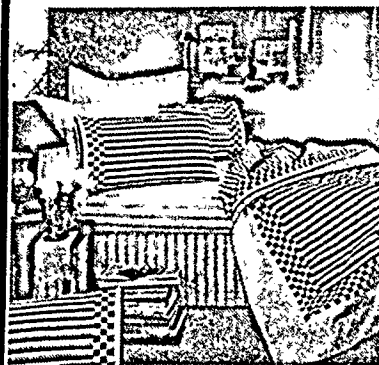
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of the African Unity Mission. Youssoufou congratulated the students for organizing the celebration and informed them that he had read African history in French and English and found both versions out to lunch. Then Youssoufou announced that he was a Christian! This was somewhat of an embarrassment, because in the history of the world according to Farrakhan, the true religion of the black man is Islam, and all racially and culturally conscious black men have returned to Islam. In the real world, of course, neither proposition is true.

When Farrakhan took the podium he was greeted with a rousing ovation from the mostly black audience. Fifty-six years old, a handsome pecan-tan complexioned man of above-average height, with a texture of hair my grandmother used to call "nice nappy," Farrakhan has the studied elegance of a seasoned performer. On this occasion he was dressed to the height of fashion in a GQ sort of way. While his taste in attire is little conservative for my taste, a guy behind me exclaimed, "Yo! Homeboy is as clean as the Board of Health!" On stage he moves with the ease of an Apollo Theater MC and speaks with the elocution of an accomplished actor. Watching him, one sometimes gets the impression that the play is the thing after all. Farrakhan's love of performance recalls another well-known fundamentalist exhorter, Jimmy Swaggart. A cousin to both country star Mickey Gilley and that venerable cherry-picker Jerry Lee Lewis, Swaggart himself wanted to be a singing piano man.

Farrakhan the musician initially harbored highbrow ambitions. I once saw a videotape of him on the old Ted Mack *Amateur Hour*. Unless my ear failed me, it is the Paganini variations he is performing on the violin. The variations require virtuoso technique, yet Farrakhan was in his early teens at the time and his performance was *bravissimo*. Farrakhan is mum about why he abandoned his desire for a career as a concert violinist, but given the rampant racism and cultural chauvinism white promoters, conductors, and musicians displayed toward black classical musicians of Farrakhan's generation, it is easy to imagine a thousand horrors he might have endured. In his quest to embrace the canon of European art music and make magic in front of a full symphony orchestra, Farrakhan had chosen a path in life that was almost certain to lead to heartbreak. Consider the experience of Ron Carter, one of the premier bass violinists in the world. Like Wynton Marsalis, Hubert Laws, Richard Davis, et al., Carter was trained in the European classical repertoire, with degrees from the Eastman and Manhattan schools of music. Yet he told William Raspberry in the *Daily News*: "In 1967 Leopold Stokowski told me that he wanted me but whites were not ready to see a black man in a symphony orchestra." After many such slights, Carter concentrated on a career in African-American classical music, jazz. He recently recorded an album of Bach's compositions for the double bass violin.

Eventually Farrakhan turned to nightclub performance. Billing himself as "The Charmer," he sang calypso songs and love ballads. But the crowning achievement of his musical career came with the early-'60s black nationalist anthem "The White Man's Heaven Is the Black Man's Hell," which he wrote, sang, and accompanied on violin. It is apparent from the lush brooding sound he coaxes from his instrument on this record that years after he had surrendered his ambitions for a career as a classical musician, he retained the virtuoso's touch. The fashion in which he claims center stage, even now, as the "national representative of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad," demonstrates that he has also retained the showman's flash. At the Fine Arts Center, he strode onstage flanked by the usual complement of fierce and fearless-looking warriors of the Fruit of Islam, the internal security officers of the Nation of

Islam, who stand their ground with a stony resolve that makes the beefeaters at Buckingham Palace look like nervous nannies. But dramatic as his entrance was, it was almost staid compared with many I've witnessed in the black community, where he is introduced by a professional announcer who claims, "He's prettier than Muhammad Ali and can sing better than Michael Jackson."

The star attraction held forth for three and a half hours, his speech an eccentric concoction of fact and fancy that was part Orwellian doublespeak, part black nationalist sloganeering, part fundamentalist Islamic dogma, and part postmodernist free-form African-American rap. Farrakhan is always happy to dabble in history, often offering grandiloquent philosophical speculations on the meaning and destiny of world civilization. But on this occasion he was actually invited to lecture on African-American history. As a former history professor in the W. E. B. DuBois Department of African-American Studies at this very university, I welcomed the opportunity to examine the minister's ideas on the subject and consider whether they represented any advance over the level of discussion 20 years ago, when the DuBois department was established.

Since I am not in the habit of preaching sermons, I am always fascinated when I hear of a preacher lecturing on history. It didn't take long to recognize that Farrakhan's view of the discipline was radically different from mine. For me, history combines the rigor and science of scholarly research with the art of storytelling. But Farrakhan is one of those who appears to believe history literally means "his story." That is, history is whatever the storyteller wishes it to be, for whatever reasons the narrator deems important, which are often religious or ideological. This approach is suitable for creating fiction, not determining facts. Hence, the final product is myth, not history. And one of the principal characteristics of mythmakers, of whatever stripe, is their cavalier attitude toward political, economic, and sociological details.

Farrakhan's speech was as contradictory as the rest of the evening. His topic was "Black Inferiority: Is It a Myth or Reality?" He had concluded from experience that, "Many whites will say yes. Well, when I get through with you tonight you will never say that again." Yet at another point in his oration he informed us that "as we are now, we are unfit to enter a new world reality," and declared to white America, "You have reduced us to the level of animals!" Early on he thanked "the founding fathers for guaranteeing us freedom of speech," never mentioning that amid all the fat-mouthing about "inalienable rights," several of the founders were practicing the worst form of tyranny against African Americans: chattel slavery. Farrakhan argued that the right to freedom of speech was the founders' way of "expressing confidence in the intelligence of the American people." Then he assured us that the United States was settled by "the dregs of Europe." He praised "the beauty of learning" and denounced the American love of sports, which he called, "a national sickness" (you can tell he was one of those dudes who sat around practicing the violin all day and never played any ball). But Farrakhan later told the students, "Do your own research, don't just listen to your professors." He assured them that "professors are only masters of rote learning, they can't teach you to think," then screamed at the professors in the audience, "Don't tell me you know what you're doing! It's insanity masked in a Ph.D. degree." After doing his level best to subvert the authority of professors, Farrakhan told the university administration: "I thank you for this security because this is a strange place. We live in a world where people don't respect people in high places, people in authority."

As Farrakhan rambled on, sometimes stumbling over the truth and carrying on

as though nothing of importance had happened, it eventually became clear that he was simply throwing a laundry list of issues out at the audience. He denounced "racism, sexism, and materialism," but it was hard to take this repudiation seriously. After all, Farrakhan still faithfully adheres to Elijah Muhammad's teaching that all whites are "devils," who are "evil by nature." He also believes, like all Muslim men, that women should be covered from head to toe whenever they leave the house. He lives in Elijah Muhammad's palatial Hyde Park mansion and often brags about driving a Mercedes Benz. Farrakhan's real attitude toward the liberation of women was revealed when he chastised women for wearing the "freakish clothes those designers create for you" and defended the white male's right to forbid white women from dating black men. Farrakhan's hypocrisy is perhaps best exemplified in his denunciation on this occasion of black men "frying their hair," and his recent proclamation at the Saviors Day convocation—the premiere annual event at the NOI—that silktop Al Sharpton, the Conkolene Kid, was the "baddest brother on the East Coast."

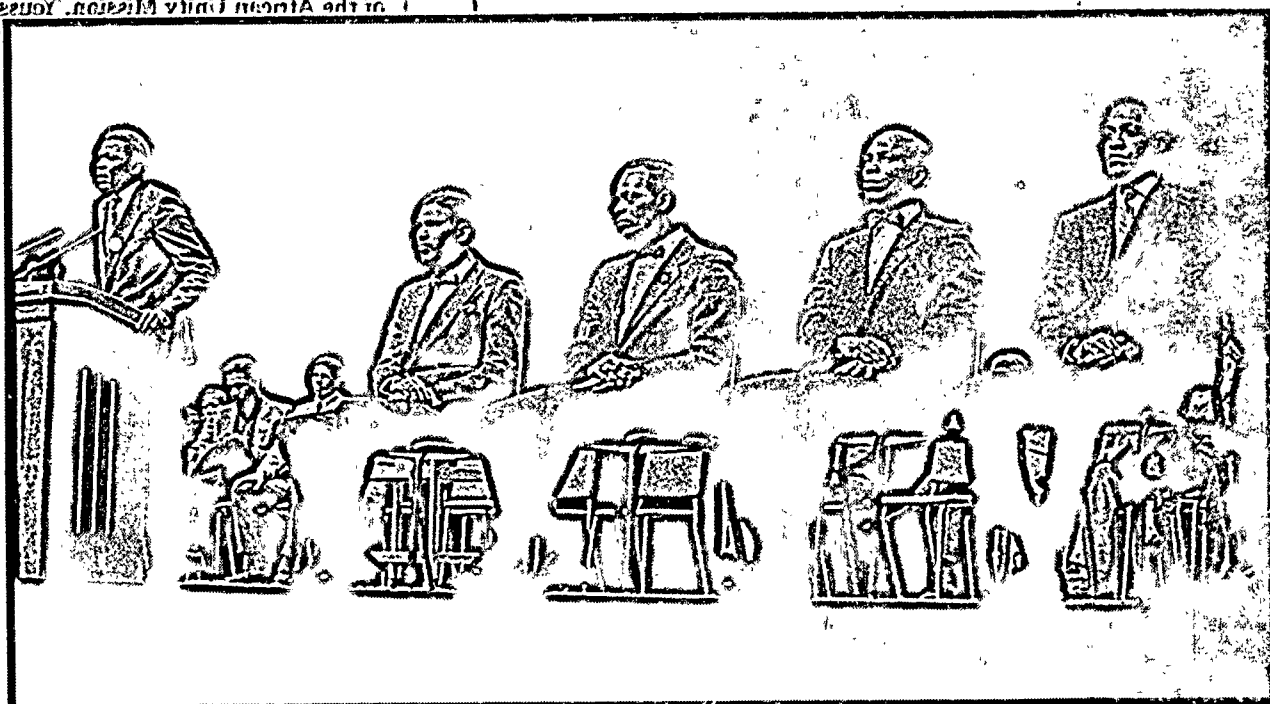
The most disappointing thing about Farrakhan's presentation was that he squandered so many ready opportunities to clarify some critical issues. After all, he had the attention of almost 4000 students for three and a half hours. No professor on campus will enjoy a similar opportunity this year. Yet instead of enlightenment, the students were offered sectarian preachment and conflicting advice on their goals and direction in life. Profound problems like the export of the American manufacturing sector overseas by the multinational corporations, and the tactics African Americans should adopt to attack the forces limiting their life chances, were given a sophomoric analysis that could only serve to compound the students' confusion.

ALL IN ALL, it was a typical Farrakhan performance: a strange cacophony of self-serving rhetoric, megalomaniacal ego-tripping, bad political advice, ambiguous pedagogic prescriptions, self-righteous sermonizing, Islamic zealotry, and caustic denunciations of the sins of American society. As usual, it provided none of the answers students were hoping for. So why do they still fight to invite him to their campuses? I can see three basic reasons. At schools where most of the black students are from the inner city, the drug crisis is devastating their neighborhoods and making civilized life impossible. As student government president Laura Saunders described it at Manhattan Community College last year, "There is a chemical warfare going on in the black community. Women and children are being gunned down because of this plague." And as Saunders also asserted, "The real war against drugs is not being waged by the police but by the community activists willing to risk their lives to confront them—like the Muslims."

Farrakhan is at his best—excoriating drugs. The crisis requires a variety of approaches, including sermonizing and action on the community level, and these are activities to which Farrakhan's organization is well suited. Many of the brothers who join the Nation are ex-street people and are hip to what's happening. Their efforts to curb the crack trade in Washington, D.C.—a barrage of education plus neighborhood patrols apprehending dealers in the act—should be applauded. In a remarkable moment of candor at Manhattan Community College, Minister Farrakhan said he understood the temptation to get high: "I used to smoke a little reefer myself. I didn't drop down from heaven, I came through hell like everybody else!" And he had the perspective to conclude his discussion by reminding us that "the police catch the little men, but there are some very dignified men in business suits who run the drug business."

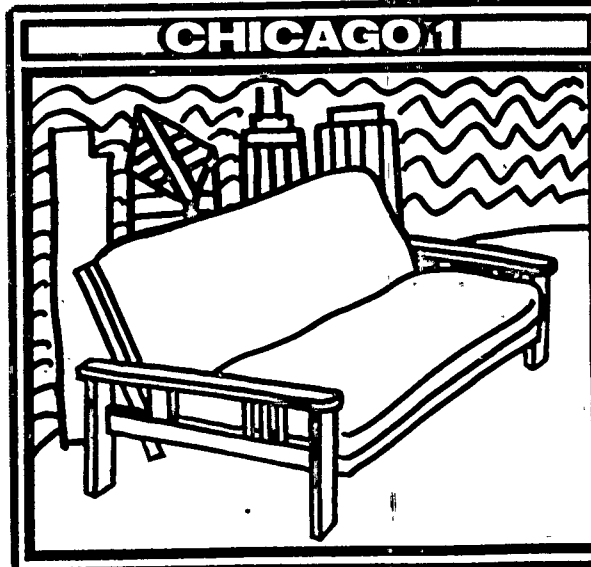
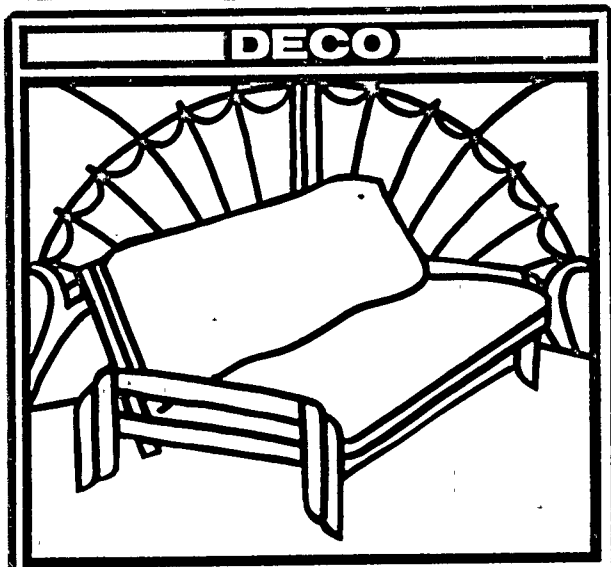
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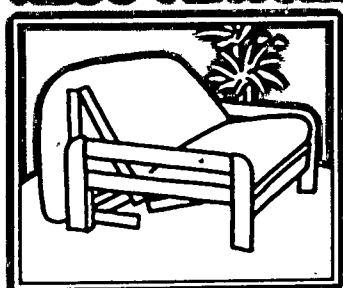
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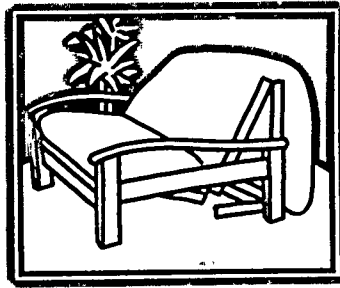
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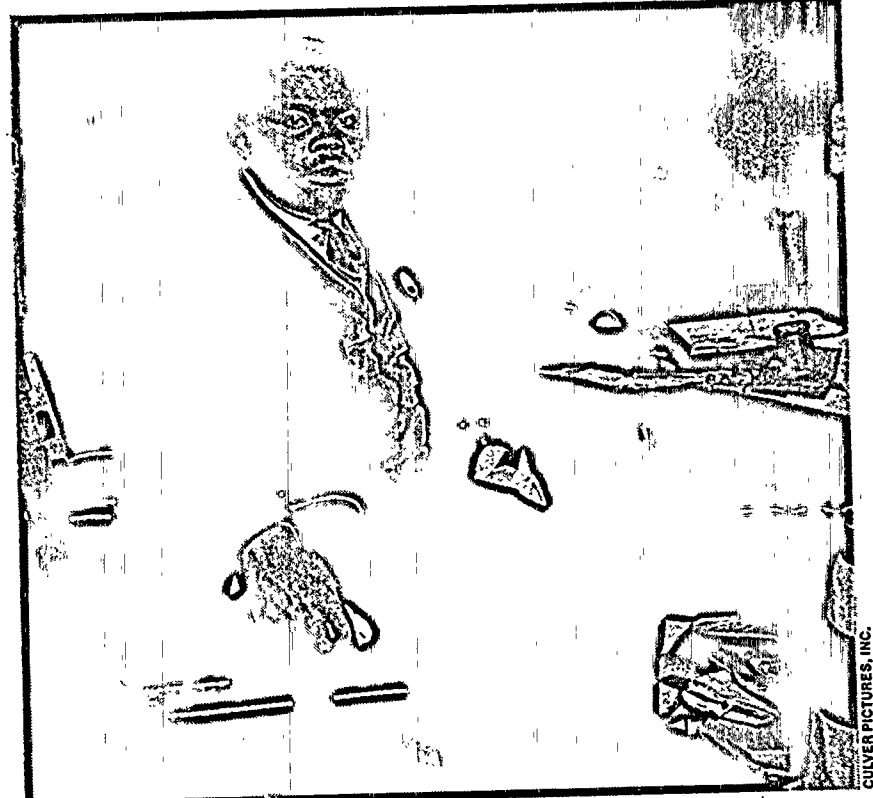
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among college students has been a rising tide of discrimination and racist aggression on campus. At U. Mass, the pattern has included both physical attacks on black students and the elevation of right-wing whites to critical posts in the student government. The school's conservative-controlled student senate went so far as to defund *Drum Magazine: The Black Literary Experience* at Amherst, six-time winner of the prestigious Columbia Scholastic Press Association Medalist Award, after nearly two decades of quarterly publication. University Chancellor Joseph Duffy was so dismayed by this arbitrary exercise of power that he personally found money to restore publication.

At Penn, a combination of racist incidents and cultural chauvinism has created an atmosphere in which Farrakhan could flourish. One student told me: "I was never an activist or anything, but a series of racist events on this campus last year forced me to get involved. Somebody

heard their parents denounce the evils of affirmative action, which they view as discrimination against whites. They have no sense of history and know nothing about the civil rights movement."

The response of black students to this white reaction is a heightened sense of racial solidarity and a turn toward black nationalist politics—specifically to what black Harvard government professor Martin Kilson, wringing his hands over the attempt of black Princeton students to bring Farrakhan there, has called the minister's "ethnocentric black populism." Farrakhan's increasing ubiquity on white college campuses in the Northeast isn't fortuitous, either—there does appear to be organized effort on his behalf. In April of 1988, Boston University hosted approximately 350 black student leaders at a conference entitled "Empowerment for Survival: Mobilizing for the Twenty-First Century—Building a Black Student Congress." Reports indicate that this was a largely pro-Farrakhan gathering, its most



UNLIKE FARRAKHAN, MARCUS GARVEY PRAISED AFRICAN AMERICANS' PRIDE

painted nigger on a gym locker and it took the university weeks to remove it, and a black student was beaten by a white football player because he didn't talk and act 'black enough,' in the opinion of the white guy." A talented painter in Penn's graduate program was discouraged from following in the tradition of Henry Ossawa Tanner, Augusta Savage, Charles White, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, et al., a tradition now over a century old. "Critiques usually concentrate on questions of technique," he told me. "But with me the discussion always centered around my subject matter. Finally one of my professors came right out and told me that 'blacks have no significance in the art world; so you are wasting your time painting black subjects.'" Another professor commented, "Blacks are a hostile race and I don't see that in your work." Yet another speculated, "Perhaps the reason blacks have not contributed more to the graphic arts is because their talents lay in singing and dancing."

As post-'60s children who inherited a revolution in black consciousness, the present generation of Afro-American students has high expectations of the university. But their aspirations have run head-on into the agenda of white students of the New Right and their coconspirators among the faculty. U. Mass professor Michael Thelwell identifies the New Right students as "products of the Reagan era. Most undergraduates now on campus came of age under the Reagan administration and they have always

visible organizer a since-graduated Penn student named Conrad X. Tillard. Tillard, who physically resembles Farrakhan, was the moving force behind the minister's campus visit in 1988. A source attending the conference told me: "He showed up surrounded by nonstudents who dressed and acted like members of the Nation of Islam. All Tillard wanted to talk about was how we should support Minister Farrakhan's program. He acted like he was Farrakhan's personal representative." Presumably, the creation of the African-American Student Congress also established a pro-Farrakhan network.

Yet the question remains: why don't black students turn to learned Afro-American professors for answers to their most pressing questions? After all, many of these professors were themselves student activists, particularly at U. Mass, where such major '60s figures as Mike Thelwell, Bill Strickland, John Bracey, and Julius Lester now teach. But black professors, like all professors, are creatures of the book, and many black students evidently prefer a style of discourse typified by the "dynamic orality" of Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan. This is a style rooted in the oratorical tradition of the black church, that most influential of all African-American institutions. But for all his flair as a performer, it is also a style that Farrakhan has yet to fully master.

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read. Refusing to surrender to this attempt to crush their spirits, black folk kept their souls intact by creating a rich and varied oral literature that reached its apotheosis in the sermon. As an oratorical art form, the Afro-American sermon prizes a poetic conception of language, promotes a heroic, optimistic idea of human possibility, and employs a dramatic style of presentation that generates such emotional power it seems capable of summoning the spirit of God. At its best the sermon takes the form of an inspired philosophical exegesis on a profound theological or secular question, with the moral lessons clearly articulated in a recurring theme. And since the presentation is usually improvised, the speaker, like a good jazz soloist, can return to the main theme whenever he chooses.

This is the tradition that informs and shapes the oratory of Martin Luther King, Jesse Jackson, Benjamin Hooks, and William Gray, all ordained ministers in the black church. In contrast, the oratory of Louis Farrakhan is characterized by banal, stilted prose, a chronic pessimism that is sometimes nihilistic, and an often incoherent presentation. Only the dramatic flair remains. But the sad truth is that this may be all Farrakhan needs to retain his popularity. Contemporary African-American students are postmodern media babies, with a collective consciousness shaped by primetime television, bad movies, and rap. Like all American youth, they are programmed to succumb to the spectacle of performance—hence their fatal attraction to Farrakhan.

Political theorist Guy Debord offers insight into this phenomenon in *Society of the Spectacle*: "The spectacle presents itself as something enormously positive, indisputable and inaccessible. It says nothing more than 'That which appears is good, that which is good appears.' The attitude which it demands in principle is passive acceptance, which in fact it already obtained by its manner of appearing without reply." At the speeches I attended the students were provided no opportunity to ask questions of Farrakhan. Furthermore, the black students I talked to afterward expressed no desire to investigate what lay behind the self-assured image of power and certainty he projects from the podium. If they did they might well discover what Gertrude Stein found out about Oakland: "There's no there there." The students' willingness to accept Farrakhan at face value suggests that they seek not enlightenment but catharsis. As one black professor said, "They just want to see somebody black get up and sass white folks."

IN NUMEROUS SPEECHES, Farrakhan has argued that African Americans constitute a captive nation that will one day sever its ties to white Americans in a cataclysmic upheaval, then take its place in the family of independent states. The critical questions for those who would live under his rule are: What kind of society does he envision? And what type of leadership model would he choose?

Farrakhan, who told his U. Mass audience that he was ordained to lead by an "unseen power," favors a theocracy, an Islamic state based on Koranic law. The only example of such a state in the world today is Iran. During the Algerian Revolution against French colonialism, Franz Fanon, the black psychiatrist and premier theorist of the FLN, argued that the establishment of an Islamic theocracy in the 20th century would be a return to "primitive medievalism." Thus far, events in Iran have verified Fanon's prophecy—most recently in the case of Salman Rushdie. So far, Farrakhan has failed to comment publicly on the Ayatollah Khomeini's call for Rushdie's death.

But we can surmise something of his attitude toward those who disagree with him from his U. Mass comments on those who attended a recent black leadership conference to which he was not invited: "If they were manure they couldn't even draw flies." Even more telling is his fam-

ous denunciation of black Washington Post reporter Milton Coleman: "One day soon we will punish you with death!"

It is such behavior that inspires many observers to conclude that Farrakhan aspires to become an American ayatollah. But most of the middle-class blacks Farrakhan courts so assiduously prefer the position of 19th century African-American orator, editor, abolitionist, and social critic Frederick Douglass: "I know of no group of men who are so wise and just that they can be trusted with control over the rights of other men." Though he regularly praises Marcus Garvey, it seems that Farrakhan hasn't carefully studied the UNIA founder's work. When Garvey first visited the U.S. in 1915, he offered this assessment of African Americans: "I have traveled a good deal through many countries, and from my observations and study, I unhesitatingly and unreservedly [sic] say that the American Negro is the peer of all Negroes, the most progressive and foremost unit in the expansive chain of scattered Ethiopia." After a lengthy tour of American cities, Garvey said he had witnessed African Americans owning and managing "banks, stores, cafes, restaurants, theaters and real-estate agencies that fill my heart with joy to realize . . . that at one center of Negrodom, at least, the people of the race have sufficient pride to do things for themselves." Unfortunately, Farrakhan has yet to learn what Garvey knew three quarters of a century ago. He will never enjoy a following like Jesse Jackson's because the majority of African Americans are profoundly optimistic—especially those skilled African Americans whose time, expertise, and money would be so useful to the NOI. Their heroic optimism is revealed in a wide variety of folk forms: the B'rer Rabbit stories, the John Henry legend, spirituals and the blues, even the best rap.

In news reports about Farrakhan, one key question is almost never asked: What is it about American society that continues to produce nationalist movements among each generation of African Americans? After all, these movements signify mass alienation from the American body politic, and disillusionment about the promise of the American dream. Farrakhan, like Marcus Garvey and Elijah Muhammed, is a product of the African experience in America; and just as Mormonism, which denies blacks the priesthood, is a product of American racial ideology, it should surprise no one that the black ordeal in the U.S. has produced at least one theology that holds "the white man is the devil."

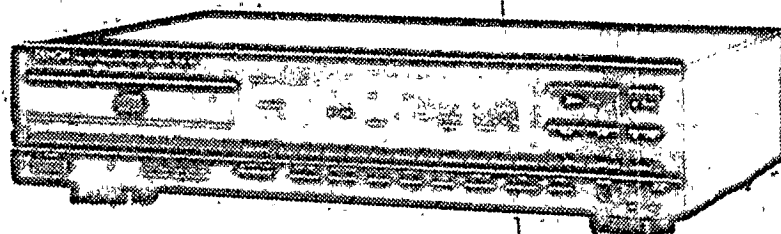
I believe there is a legitimate role for Minister Farrakhan to play in African-American affairs. By training and temperament, he is best suited for the role of moral teacher: chastising the sinful and slovenly, rebuking the trifling parent or profligate spouse, railing against licentiousness, and threatening criminals with swift retribution on earth and hellfire in the hereafter. Minister Farrakhan is damn good at that, and the Lord knows there are many lost souls out here who are in dire need of such instruction.

But by talent and temperament Louis Farrakhan is a preacher, not a political leader, for he views the world through a dogmatic theological prism that reveals issues only in stark contrasts of black and white. Hence he lacks the flexibility for compromise which is essential to the political process. Since my visit to Manhattan Community College last year, I have listened to many speeches by and interviews with the minister. I have tried to find there some comprehensive plan for the development of black America, a plan that would justify Farrakhan's claim to leadership. But the more I searched, the

more the minister's plan resembled the emperor's new clothes. Instead of a blueprint for black progress, I have been subjected to many hours of impassioned rhetoric and moral preachment, uninspired by poetic metaphor and unenlightened by rigorous thought.

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Action Required/Taken: APPOINTMENT SET TO PICK
UP ORIGINAL LETTER & ENVELOPE 8/25/89.
INTERVIEW [REDACTED] FURTHER AT VILLAGE VOICE
OFFICES.

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copies:
1 - 9A-NY-186561
1 -
1 -

9A-NY-186561

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
AUG 24 1989	
FBI - NEW YORK	

[REDACTED] 2

To: Office Services Manager

Requested by

SA

Squad

JTF-1

Date

8/24/89

Extension

3194

File No.

9A-NY-186561

Subject

FRUITS OF ISLAM

Social Security Account #

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Aliases

Address

Birth Date

Birthplace

Race

Sex

☐ Male
☐ Female

☐ Exact Spelling

☐ All References

☐ Main Security Case Files Only

☐ Security References Only

☐ Main Criminal Case Files Only

☐ Criminal References Only

☐ Main Security (If no Main, list all Security References)

☐ Main Criminal (If no Main, list all Criminal References)

☐ Restrict Locality of

☒ General Indices:

☐ NEG ☐ POS

☐ ISIS:

☐ NEG ☐ POS

Searched by

Date

Searched by

Date

☐ Confidential Indices:

☐ NEG ☐ POS

☐ OCIS:

☐ NEG ☐ POS

Searched by

Date

Searched by

Date

☐ ELSUR Indices:

☐ NEG ☐ POS

☐ IIS:

☐ NEG ☐ POS

Searched by

Date

Searched by

Date

☐ FOIMS:

AUTOMATIC SEARCH

Searched by

DATE SEP 01 1989

Date

File & Serial Number

Remarks

File & Serial Number

Remarks

Fruit OF ISLAM (FOI)

100-123986-2404

2/57

105-30342*

5/58

30340-1*

12/58

174-2170-I-58

6/75

Comp Fruit OF ISLAM

100A-182995-1503

8/87

Consolidated by

Date

Reviewed by

Date

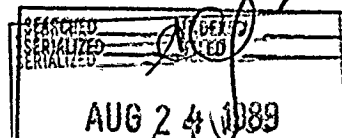
File Review Symbols

I - Identical

? - Not identifiable

NI - Not identical

U - Unavailable reference



AUG 24 1989

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P.1
AYH

9A-NY-186561-7

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
SEP 19 1982	
FBI - NEW YORK	
AYH	

1

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 9/11/89

[redacted] "Village Voice" weekly newspaper, 842 Broadway, New York, New York, telephone number (212) 460-1452, was advised of the identities of Special Agent [redacted] of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and [redacted] New York City Police Department, and the nature of the interview. [redacted] provided the following information:

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[redacted] advised that the "Village Voice" published an article on August 15, 1989, [redacted] entitled, "Who is listening to LOUIS FARRAKHAN...and how did he become big man on campus?" The article was a negative commentary on FARRAKHAN and his influence in the Black community. On August 22, 1989, a letter, which had been transmitted through the U.S. Mail, was received at the office of the "Village Voice" at 842 Broadway, New York, New York. The envelope was postmarked "Newark, New Jersey," and dated "August 15, 1989." The return address on the envelope was listed as [redacted] Summit, New Jersey 07901. Inside the envelope was a two-page letter, written in red ink, which threatened the life of [redacted] because of the negative comments regarding LOUIS FARRAKHAN in the "Village Voice" article. The letter was signed [redacted]

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[redacted] advised that personnel at the "Village Voice" were concerned about the threatening nature of the letter. [redacted] notified the Summit, New Jersey Police Department of the letter and the individual who allegedly authored it. A [redacted] of the Summit, New Jersey Police Department told [redacted] that [redacted] was a member of the Fruit of Islam Organization. The members of the organization, including [redacted] lived in a house in Summit, New Jersey. [redacted] further told [redacted] that the Fruit of Islam Organization follows the teaching of LOUIS FARRAKHAN. Members of the group may be capable of violence.

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[redacted] advised that the [redacted] of the "Village Voice," [redacted] was concerned about the threatening nature of the letter and the possibility of violence by [redacted] and his organization. [redacted] was advised to contact the FBI regarding the threatening letter. [redacted] provided the FBI with the original envelope and letter allegedly sent by [redacted]

Investigation on 8/28/89 at New York, New York File # 9A-NY-186561

by SA [redacted] ech Date dictated 9/5/89

9A-NY-186561

Continuation of FD-302 of , On 8/28/89, Page 2

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b7C

stated that, unfortunately, the envelope and letter had been handled by numerous employees of the "Village Voice." stated he would cooperate with the FBI in any manner in their investigation.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 3/5/90

TO: SAC II (9A-NY-186561)
FROM: SSA [REDACTED] JTF-1/C-19
SUBJECT: [REDACTED]
VILLAGE VOICE-VICTIM;
EXT;
OO:NY

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It is requested that captioned case be reassigned due to the
extended leave of the case agent.

*Reassign
3/2/90 gmc*

JJC:gt
(1)

9A-14-186561-

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④
HC

[REDACTED]

9-NY-186561
SGH/hs

1

The following investigation was conducted on January 11, 1989, at New York, New York, by Special Agent (SA) [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] SUMMIT NEW JERSEY POLICE DEPARTMENT was telephonically contacted and advised the following:

A local record check regarding [REDACTED] revealed no criminal record. [REDACTED] stated he knew of [REDACTED] and his association with the LOUIS FARRAKHAN ORGANIZATION - FRUIT OF ISLAM. [REDACTED] resides at [REDACTED] Summit, New Jersey. [REDACTED] resides in a tenement building, which houses six other families. [REDACTED] was questioned regarding the threatening letter sent to the VILLAGE VOICE and [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] he had no intention of physically harming [REDACTED] but merely wanted to express his anger at the article, which negatively depicted the leader of the FRUIT OF ISLAM, LOUIS FARRAKHAN. [REDACTED] does not even know how to contact [REDACTED] directly.

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[REDACTED] advised [REDACTED] appears to be rational, and has a wife. There has never been any trouble from [REDACTED] or his family in the Summit area. [REDACTED] does not believe there are other members of the FRUIT OF ISLAM residing in the Summit, New Jersey area.

9A-NY-186561-9

SEARCHED INDEXED
SERIALIZED FILED
FEB 13 1990
FBI - NEW YORK

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

AIRTEL

DATE: 2/13/90

TO : SAC, NEWARK

FROM : ADIC, NEW YORK (9A_NY-186561) (P) (JTF-1)

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]
VILLAGE VOICE-VICTIM;
[REDACTED] VICTIM;
EXTORTION (A)
(OO: NY)

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For information of Newark Division, above captioned subject, [REDACTED] Summit, New Jersey (NJ), sent a letter to the VILLAGE VOICE NEWSPAPER, attention of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The letter vilified [REDACTED] for writing an article which was critical of LOUIS FARRAKHAN. [REDACTED] also reproached the VILLAGE VOICE for publishing the article. The letter contained explicit death threats against [REDACTED] and personnel of the VILLAGE VOICE.

It is believed that [REDACTED] is a member of the Fruit of Islam, which is led by LOUIS FARRAKHAN, the extremist Muslim leader. FARRAKHAN and his group advocate violence as a means of accomplishing particular goals.

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The New York Office (NYO) has conducted a local criminal check of [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] Summit, New Jersey Police Department, Summit, NJ, the town in which [REDACTED] resides with his wife. No derogatory information was revealed. Also [REDACTED] Summit Police Dept., interviewed [REDACTED] regarding the above letter. [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] he is not a violent individual, but needed to vent his anger against the individuals responsible for the article against FARRAKHAN.

No FBI interview of [REDACTED] is contemplated at this time. No other material of a threatening nature has been received by [REDACTED] or the VILLAGE VOICE from [REDACTED] or his organization.

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2-Newark
1-New York

SGH/sac
(4)

sec

[Handwritten signature]

9A-NY-186561

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 13 1990	
FBI - NEWARK	

[Handwritten initials]

9A-NY-186561

LEADS

NEWARK DIVISION

AT NEWARK, NEW JERSEY. Conduct indices check on subject
[REDACTED] Summit, New Jersey and
the organization, Fruit of Islam, and provide results to the NYO.

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FBI

TRANSMIT VIA:

☐ Teletype
☐ Facsimile
☒ AIRTEL

PRECEDENCE:

☐ Immediate
☐ Priority
☐ Routine

CLASSIFICATION:

☐ TOP SECRET
☐ SECRET
☐ CONFIDENTIAL
☐ UNCLAS E F T O
☐ UNCLAS

Date 3/8/90

1 TO : ADIC, NEW YORK (9A-NY-186561) (JFT-1)
 2 FROM : ACTING SAC, NEWARK (9A-NY-186561) (RUC) (C-10/TTF)
 3 SUBJECT: [REDACTED]
 4 VILLAGE VOICE - VICTIM;
 5 [REDACTED] - VICTIM;
 6 EXTORTION (A)
 7 (OO: NY)

b6
 b7C

8 Re: New York airtel to Newark, dated 2/13/90.
 9 New York Office requested Newark Division to
 10 conduct indices check on subject [REDACTED]
 11 [REDACTED] Summit, New Jersey.

12 Newark indices checks regarding captioned subject were
 13 negative. Several references regarding FRUIT OF ISLAM are
 14 contained in Newark indices. Caption subject's name was not
 15 mentioned in any of the FRUIT OF ISLAM references.

16 Newark considers this matter RUC'd.

17 2-New York
 18 1-Newark
 19 JGP/lmr
 20 (3)
 21

A-NY-186561

MAR 27 1990

FBI - NEW YORK

Approved: [Signature]

Transmitted

(Number) (Time)

Per

b6
 b7C

